



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk
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Editor's Note

It seems a bit late to be wishing you a happy New Year; this issue has been held back in order to report on our Annual General Meeting – see below for a short summary.

I had a wander around both Sunnyside Old and New recently with my camera, taking a few shots of plots, mostly dormant for the time being, though there was evidence of a good deal of manuring being added! I'm looking forward to the brighter days of spring, with the sights of green shoots and freshly planted rows to inspire me.

You will find a variety of reports and articles in this issue, and I hope you enjoy reading it. But I am always keen to use items sent in by tenants - so do make a note of your hopes and plans for the growing year, success or frustrations with particular crops or pests, or just musings on allotment life, etc. Your photos are welcome too; it is definitely the contribution of tenants which adds spice to the newsletter!

Lin Phillips, Editor

Chairman's Notes

Once again, it's the start of a year and time to plan, and hope, for a better season. If the weather is not too bad and the ground not sticky, digging is a good way of getting exercise. When the roadways are wet please avoid driving on them.

There are now two refurbished sheds near the Grantham Mews end of B road on Sunnyside Old. The Society's equipment, such as tables and gazebos, is now stored in a dry, accessible place. There are a few finishing touches required to the sheds before moving to the next project, which is to construct a wood rack from scaffold poles.

Thanks are again due to Clive Smith for masterminding the effort and to various volunteers for digging, lifting and painting.

Over the winter months, John Goffey has been organising volunteer tenant working parties to tackle jobs such as path repairs and coppice cutting. There are hazel pea and bean sticks available for collection on SSN. Coppice volunteers should just take some, and other tenants should make a donation to SAS funds via Andy our Treasurer or via the Tea Hut.

The deer problem, mainly on SSN, has been addressed by the Council, expert opinion sought and fence estimates obtained. The current position is that fencing is expensive and there is no guarantee that it would be effective. Work continues to see whether there are other deterrent methods, and tenants are asked to report sightings and identify the type of deer and which plants are affected.

A project to install two more water tanks on SSN is being developed with the Council, and estimates are being obtained.

Good gardening,
John Eaton



Brussel Sprouts – love ‘em or hate ‘em?

The mere name of Brussel sprouts can provoke a love or hate reaction, with little ground in between. Some people associate them with early memories of school dinners and Sunday lunches, when sprouts and cabbages were boiled to oblivion, releasing an acrid smell; once experienced, it can stay with you for life! However, there is also evidence that our strong individual reaction to the taste of Brussels has a genetic explanation.

Some molecules in food have shapes that lock into proteins on the surface of your tongue. That interlocking tells a nerve to send a signal to your brain that you have tasted sugar, salt, bitter, or sour.

But if you don't have the gene variant that codes for that particular taste receptor, you can eat as much as you like of the molecule and you won't know a thing about it.

There is one gene controlling taste sensitivity that scientists have characterised in a lot of detail – the catchily-named TAS2R38 gene. This gene makes a protein that interlocks with a chemical called PTC (phenylthiocarbamide) and gives the taste sensation of bitterness.

PTC isn't usually found in the human diet, but it is very similar to chemicals found in brassicas such as Brussel sprouts and cabbages.

The man who discovered this property of the chemical was Arthur Fox, who in the 1930s was in his laboratory pouring powdered PTC into a bottle, creating a cloud of the stuff. He was oblivious to the horrible odour, but the chemist on the next bench started complaining.

Intrigued, Fox decided to investigate why some people can taste PTC and others can't. He got his friends and family to try a little bit of it and tell him what they tasted. What he found was intriguing: he could predict very accurately whether a person would or wouldn't be able to sense PTC by looking at how their family had reacted to it, indicating that this ability was very tightly linked to people's genetics.

It wasn't until 2003 that scientists managed to locate the exact gene responsible, giving those of us who hate Brussel sprouts a neat, genetic explanation for why we should never have to eat them ever again.

(information taken from The Guardian, 1.11.2011)

Highlights of the Sunnyside Annual General Meeting, 19th January 2019

The AGM was held in the Sunnyside Rural Trust building and attended by a good number of tenants. John Eaton, Chairman, started the meeting off with an introduction to the use of the new defibrillator which has been installed outside the building. (You can also see the St. Johns Ambulance YouTube page, which has a good visual demonstration - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFvL7wTFzI0> or search 'How to Use a Defibrillator (AED) - First Aid Training - St John Ambulance'.

The Committee was re-elected, with the exceptions of Cynthia Fulks and Wendy Calder, who had decided to step down this year. Thanks to both of them for their hard work and commitment over the years. And welcome to Jeanne Woodcraft, who joined the Committee. To any members who didn't attend the AGM but who are interested in being part of the work of the Committee, do talk to any of its members about what is involved, and if you want to take it further, you are welcome to come to the next meeting, which is in March, as an observer.

Various ideas about making the allotments more environmentally friendly were discussed, from individual tenants installing solar panels to heat a water pump, to looking into the possibility of a wild beehive, not for harvesting honey but to promote pollination in the surrounding area.

There was a lot of discussion about dog walkers making use of the private roads on Sunnyside, which has become a problem when dogs are not kept on lead, and a decision was made to remind the Council of the need for very clear signage on this matter.

There was agreement that in addition to the donation made to the Hospice from the proceeds of the Open Day raffle, a small donation might be made to a suitable local charity each year. The Committee will check the SAS Constitution and consider which charity might be chosen for the coming year.



Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

B11B Annie Munk

Goodbye to:

A5B Joe Tattam

B32A Angela Walsh

N12, N13 Maria-Paola Andreoni

Keeping the allotments eco-friendly

The Council has banned the use of carpeting on allotments. It doesn't biodegrade but only breaks down into millions of fragments which then blow all over the allotments and the wider environment, and can't be got rid of. The same can be said of all plastic, so please be sparing about bringing it onto the site, and take all containers and sheeting, etc., away to dispose of responsibly before they break down.

The secrets of NPK

The elements of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are in all plant growth promoters, whether they be manure, compost, proprietary granules or liquid fertilisers. The proportions vary according to the intended use of the fertiliser, e.g. for leaf formation, fruit development, etc. Here is a brief description of their specialist roles in promoting plant growth.

Nitrogen helps in plant growth and development. It also positively affects the quality of leaves, seeds, and fruits. Nitrogen is a crucial component of chlorophyll, which not only gives the plants their green colour but also helps out in photosynthesis.

Phosphorus plays a significant role in the development of plant oils, sugars and starch. During the process of photosynthesis, it is phosphorus that aids in the transformation of solar energy into chemical energy. In addition, phosphorus not only encourages the growth of roots and blooming, but also helps plants to withstand stress.

Potassium is essential to plant growth, and is greatly active during the process of photosynthesis. It is responsible for producing good quality fruit as well. Potassium builds up a store of protein in the plant, and also helps prevent diseases and increases plant immunity.

The Winter Working Parties

Our working parties this winter have been progressing well, and only two working party dates are left before the spring planting season begins. A lot of people have volunteered their time so far for the October, November and January working parties, and our thanks are due to all of them. Worth particular mention is the coppicing of Jubilee Coppice East (SSN) on 6th January. There was a good attendance of volunteers from both Sunnyside Old and New, and the work proceeded so well that we were sitting down to lunch soon after 12.30 with the job done! Much of this was down to Bernard's efforts with his chainsaw, so a big thank-you to him.

We also had the first big communal bonfire of the winter on N55 on the same day; this consumed all the useless off-cuts from the coppicing, all the laurel cuttings from the SSO November working party, a complete overgrown hazel tree, and two barrow-loads of accumulated combustible rubbish from B18 (my own plot). Pea sticks from the coppicing have been bundled up and are available to all, as are the hazel bean poles. These can be collected from Jubilee Coppice, on the corner of the top road and the road that goes down by the SRT gate; but please remember to make a donation to SAS funds, especially if you were not one of the volunteers! We will be looking for volunteers for the last two working parties of the year, on February 3rd and March 3rd, so please keep these dates free as there is plenty of further work to be done on both SSO and SSN. And as usual, a lunch of hot soup and rolls will be provided at the Tea Hut.

John Goffey, B18

Allotment Information Pack

Have a Look!

Just to let you know that our website contains a lot of useful information for tenants:

<http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/about/allotments=information-pack>

Also, check out our own Facebook page, where members are increasingly posting great photos and comments on their successes (and challenges) on their plot.

Please join our group for allotment gardening chat.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1466477513362340/>



Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary:	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	Andy James	865061
Newsletter Editor:	Lin Phillips	862882
Other members:		
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852

You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: @sunnysideallotments.org.uk apart from John Eaton who is: johne@ and John Goffey who is: johng@

Please Note: To offset rising printing costs, an electronic version of future editions of the newsletter will be sent to all those people that supply an email address to Jenny Sippings – (jennysippings@virginmedia.com).

Christmas Drinks Event, Sunday 17th December 2018

About 60 or more tenants came to our annual Christmas drinks event, including several new tenants who were especially welcome. It's always a very sociable occasion and a good opportunity to get to know your fellow gardeners.

What could be more festive than singing well-known carols together in the open air? Aply led by Rosemary and her choir, this musical interlude now seems to be establishing itself as something of a tradition.

After a very wet and windy Saturday, the Sunday dawned dry, thankfully. We were able to lay out all the food and have a thoroughly 'al fresco' event. The variety and quantity of food donated were amazing; thanks to everyone for their contributions. It was obviously much enjoyed, as there were only a few bits and pieces left.

Many thanks too for the contributions of wine, and especial thanks to Cynthia and Wendy for producing a particularly 'more-ish' mulled wine, which was much appreciated, judging by the number of empty bottles afterwards!

So, without wishing the year away, I look forward to seeing even more of you at this event in December 2019. Happy New Year!

Angela, B13 (Tea Hut)



Rent reminder!

To those few tenants who still haven't yet paid their annual rent to the Council (it was due by the end of September), please do so as a matter of urgency - otherwise there is a real risk of losing your plot. If you have changed your address, do notify the Council directly.

Need a Little Help around the Allotment?

Our youngest tenant, Sam Barley, is looking to increase his earnings in 2019, and is available to do work on your allotment outside of school hours. He will mow paths, clear plots, get stuck into digging and weeding, and water your crops or your greenhouse when you are on holiday. His rates are very reasonable and he is a keen worker. To make arrangements with him, contact Sam on 0759462565, or by email on sam-barley15@gmail.com or sambarley13@outlook.com.

Membership of Sunnyside Allotment Society

If you haven't paid your £4.00 Sunnyside Allotment Society subs yet this year, please do so as soon as possible. In order to be included in this year's membership, payments must be made by May. Either give it directly to Andy, our treasurer, or leave it in an envelope for him in the tea hut (B15).

Allotmentees' Liability Insurance

SAS is a member of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (their website contains a lot of useful information for gardeners – contact Jenny Sippings for the password.) Membership of the NSALG now includes allotmentees' liability insurance, so all paid up members of SAS are eligible to contract in to the free allotmentees' liability insurance scheme. This scheme offers £50k liability cover to any member plot-holder accused of accidentally causing injury or damaging property.

This cover is well worth the cost of SAS membership in itself. In addition, SAS members can participate in our autumn group seed-ordering scheme with King's Seeds, which offers considerable savings on the annual cost of seeds.

The Sunnyside Allotment Society works on your behalf, co-ordinating work to maintain the communal areas of the site and hosting the annual Open Day and other events. SAS is also required to report to the Council on matters of vacancies and waiting lists, and represents the interests of tenants at regular Council meetings. Members also receive this exclusive quarterly newsletter! .

Subs for 2019 (4.00) can be sent with this slip to Andy James (4 Field Way) or left at the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Plot Number: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ cash/cheque (please circle)